

Blue Ribbon Report Update State Parks & Recreation



*Presented by:
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Blue Ribbon Committee – formed by Governor Rick Snyder

- Committee work started in Fall of 2011 and was completed September 2012
- Sixteen member panel
- Executive Order Charge
 - Identify roll of state parks and the importance of outdoor recreation areas
 - Providing a vision for the future of the state parks
 - Recommending a strategy for the expansion and proper allocation of expected resources in order to meet the new vision of state parks
 - Proposing a vision and a strategy for the future consideration aimed at creating stronger linkages between state parks and county and local parks to maximize use and cost efficiencies



Recommendation 1:

Identify and protect important natural, cultural, historic, and prehistoric resources for the enjoyment and education of Michigan's residents and visitors, and expand efforts to engender stewardship of those resources.

Stewardship Volunteers

- 1,275 volunteers, over 11,000 hours, 60 state parks covering 8,000 acres

Management & Strategy Plans - Plan to manage and sustain our valued resources

- Over 35 plans in the past six years
- Goal is to complete all 103 in the next three years
- The DNR Managed Public Land Strategy
 - New strategy for land ownership
 - Criteria for potential land disposal
 - Targeted investments and project boundary review

**Partnerships and Grant**

- Sterling State Park, \$3.4 million in EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
 - Habitat projects contributed significantly to beneficial use impairment delisting targets for the Raisin River area of concern
- Lake Hudson Recreation Area - DNR Wildlife Division, Pheasants Forever and the Lake Hudson Pheasant Cooperative - restoring 500 acres of grassland habitat
- Department of Corrections' horticulture training program
 - 6,190 native trees to replace landscape trees killed by the emerald ash borer

**Education**

- Dark Sky Preserves
 - Established 2013-2015
 - Regional partnership with Wilderness State Park, Port Crescent State Park and Rockport State Park

Recommendation 2:

Diversify funding and use new criteria to target investments toward achieving the outcomes articulated in this report.

Bringing All Plans Together

- 2013 DNR Goals as well as multiple plans -
 - DNR Managed Public Land Strategy
 - DNR Parks & Recreation Division's 2009-2019 Strategic Plan
 - Blue Ribbon Plan
 - State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
 - Michigan Comprehensive Trail Plan
 - 2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan
- The plans have been cross-referenced to ensure consistency in the goal statements
- Action steps were coordinated to achieve efficiency, avoiding duplication of effort

**Funding Considerations**

- Blue Ribbon Panel, along with key advisory groups, conducted a summit meeting in January 2013 to discuss common goals for the future
 - One key outcome – Require an "opt out" plan for Recreation Passport
 - Ensure sustainable funding for the park and recreation system
- The Michigan State Park Advisory Committee is reviewing options for sustainable short and long term funding
 - Expanding the locations requiring recreation passports
 - Camping fees
 - Adjusted in 2006, 2008 and 2015
 - 2015 exceeded estimates and camp nights increased 9%.
 - Planning camping fee adjustments for 2018
 - Current camping reservations are up 23% to date, compared to 2016



Recommendation 3:

Make the development of statewide and regional systems of connected trail networks one of the state's highest priorities for outdoor recreation investment over the next ten years.

Michigan Comprehensive State Trail Plan (Trail Plan)

- Adopted in the Spring of 2013 by the Michigan Snowmobile and Trail Advisory Council (MTAC)
- Action plan, establishing priorities, was adopted in January 2014

Iron Belle Trail

- 2,064 mile hiking and biking trail
- Vision plan was launched by the Governor
- Connects Belle Isle Park in Detroit to Ironwood, in Upper Peninsula

**Statewide Partner Trail Summit**

- mParks sponsored a trail summit with over 200 participants
- Statewide partners discussing trails statewide

Recommendation 4:

Encourage greater connections between communities and their recreational assets to strengthen regional identities.

Connections To Communities

DNR and mParks hosted a "think tank"

Tourism Cares Partnership

- Five state parks, historic sites and Belle Isle Park
- Belle Isle Park alone attracted 350 volunteers
- Total of 1,105 professional volunteers, donating over \$400,000 in material and labor

The Big 400 (surrounding Chelsea)

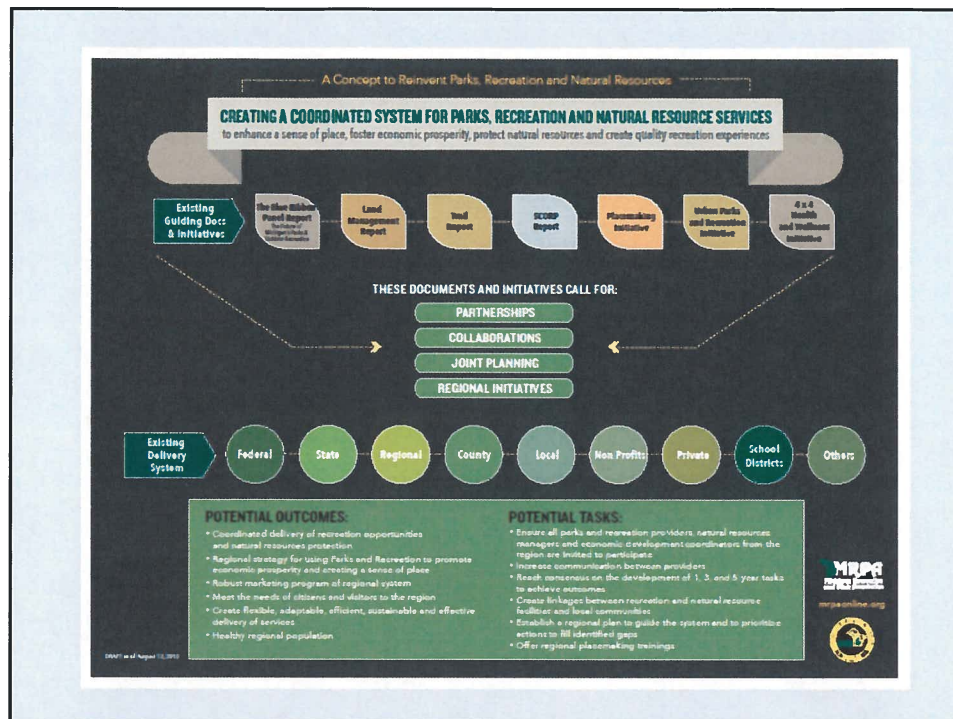
- Mission is to stimulate the economy in the regional area

Outreach and inclusion Initiatives

- Designed to collaborate with communities adjacent to state parks and recreation areas and with other local agencies to maximize the connection of people and resources

**Key partnerships**

- Too many to list all - Some include: Merrill Shoe Company, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Pure Michigan, North Face, McDonalds Corporation and many others to assist with Rec 101. Also initiated in 2013 was an additional component of "Fresh Air Fitness" programs to encourage healthy activities in the outdoors, held at public parks.



Recommendation 5:

Use parks and recreation areas as a key tool for revitalizing Michigan's core urban areas by creating four to five Signature Parks and integrating green infrastructure into Michigan's urban redesign and redevelopment efforts.

Urban State Parks & Program

1) Belle Isle Park – Downtown Detroit - February 2014

- Partnership of DNR Parks & Recreation (PRD), DNR Law Enforcement, Michigan State Police, Michigan Department of Transportation and others
- Visitation grown to 4.1 million with 80+% satisfaction rating



2) Outdoor Adventure Center – Began 2013, opened 2015

- Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund – public/private partnership
- Innovative destination offering hands-on exposure, healthy outdoor recreation experiences and opportunities



3) Summer Youth Employment Program – FY2016 436 youth participants with 9 youth organizations

Partnerships and Grants

- **Saginaw** - Joint venture with Saginaw County Parks and Recreation
- **Grand Rapids** - Riverfront transformation
- **Flint** - Acquisition of river front land and Hamilton Dam removal
- **Grand Traverse Greenway Trail** grants and technical assistance leading to the Flint River Greenway System.



Recommendation 6:

Integrate tourism and economic development marketing in order to fully leverage the economic and social benefits that parks and outdoor recreation resources can provide.

Strategic Plan, Blue Ribbon and other approved Statewide plans

- Align programming and park with plan goals and objectives
- PRD Strategic Plan update process is underway and will be adopted in 2017

Marketing Opportunities

DNR PRD - New social media and marketing campaigns being developed

- State parks, Recreational Boating and Trails
- Recreation passports
 - FY2016 participation was at nearly 32% of 7.8 million passenger vehicles
- Engaging with the Pure Michigan marketing campaigns

**Programming**

- In 2013 – over 500 Rec 101 programs involving over 15,000 participants
- In 2017 - over 1,200 events statewide to stimulate outdoor recreation opportunities
- Objective is to expand value to the public to enhance our relevance

Joint County/State Parks

- The first established was Watkins Lake State Park in 2016 with Washtenaw County Parks
- In process - ORV Park in S. E. Michigan
 - In the process of acquiring and establishing our second state/county park with Oakland County Park Commission for an ORV park.

Recommendation 7:

Prioritize investment in the safety and maintenance of, and access to, parks and recreation spaces.

State Parks & Recreation Infrastructure

- Assets are over \$1 billion
- \$285 million in infrastructure needs, including \$50 million of the most critical needs

**Visitation & Access**

- Camp nights over one million, second in the nation
- 26 million visitors annually

**Job Training in State Park Setting**

- Employ 38 crews of adults with disabilities in collaboration with Michigan Rehabilitative Services

Thank You – Questions?

